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ABSTRACT

The focus of this book is a study of voice through writing among poor, urban preadolescent fifth-grade girls. Voice became a central focus when the researcher, engaged in observations of peer writing conferences for students who were not native speakers, noted that the girls appeared to lose their voices as the year went on. The loss of voice was apparent through increased silence in conferences, discussions, and their written pieces. Because there were only 11 girls in this class of 28 students, the issue of voice became more important and their voices were often literally drowned out. Following an introduction, Chapter 2 begins a discussion of language and language choice, particularly as choice relates to power, prestige, and resistance. Chapter 3 explores the theoretical constructs of voice more fully, and chapter 4 considers the contexts in which the girls wrote, as well as the genres, topics, and themes they chose. The second part of this chapter focuses on these 11 girls themselves. Chapters 5 and 6 consider the writing workshop as the public forum for the students' writing. Chapter 7 considers the private context that the teacher and researcher created to allow the girls to express their personal voices through writing. Chapter 8 also deals with private expression. Chapter 9 explores critical response to the writing of the girls in the class, and the final chapter explores further research about the writing process. If the voices of these preadolescent girls are heard, they can become powerful voices about the urban childhood experience. Appendixes discuss methodology and the ethics of ethnographic research. (Contains 171 references.) (SLD)

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